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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**SUBJECT: Board of National Estimates Views on the BOUNDER**

1. Recent evidence of Soviet aircraft development efforts includes the observation on the ground, at Moscow of a new bomber, designated BOUNDER. It is of large size and heavy weight, with a modified delta-wing configuration apparently designed for supersonic flight. With the limited information available, it has not been possible to determine the BOUNDER's intended mission, but we believe it could represent a significant step forward in Soviet bomber design. Preliminary analysis indicates it to be powered by four turbojet engines using conventional fuels, which would give it medium range, possibly with supersonic "dash". The possibility for development of BOUNDER with a more advanced propulsion system exists. However, present information is inadequate to permit an estimate of BOUNDER's probable development.

2. The portion of the BOUNDER's fuselage forward of the wing appears to be undesirably long for a conventionally fueled bomber. As one possible explanation for this characteristic, we have considered the applicability of various types of nuclear propulsion systems to the BOUNDER design. In our opinion, all known types of aircraft nuclear propulsion systems present shortcomings in their application to the BOUNDER in its present configuration.

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Further, no connection has been established between BOUNDER and the Soviet atomic energy program. If, however, the BOUNDER is a developmental model intended for eventual use with nuclear propulsion, we believe that extensive modification and a long period of further development would be required prior to operational availability.

3. The BOUNDER apart, we have estimated and continue to estimate that within the next few years the USSR could fly an airborne nuclear testbed with at least one nuclear power unit providing useful thrust during some portion of the flight.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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